

As parents of a daughter with Down Syndrome who utilizes services provided by the Open Door Center in Valley City, we implore you to increase the state funding in House Bill 1012. We are in strong support of agencies requesting 4% and 3% increases which correlate with federal inflation rates over the last two years.

The Open Door Center in Valley City has been critical in ensuring our daughter leads a purposeful, happy, healthy, and safe life. She is an active member of her community working at a pre-school and local restaurant. She volunteers at Sheyenne Valley Friends of Animals and the ARC thrift store. She participates in Special Olympics, the local wellness center and dance studio. This is only possible because of the dedicated staff at the Open Door Center. It is becoming more difficult to recruit and retain staff due to competing wages in other local businesses. In order to be competitive, they need these increases to continue to provide essential services to our daughter and others in their care. The staff at the Open Door Center helps our daughter live fully with as much independence as possible. Without these increases, potentially her current quality of life could be negatively impacted.

Budgets should not be balanced on the backs of the disability community. We encourage you to approve these inflationary increases so we can continue to move forward in protecting and ensuring a good quality of life for our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration, Andre and Marla DeLorme